

Creating our Community of Learning, by Rosa Flaherty, Yr 13

When I first heard about the new “Community of Learning” initiative, I imagined something rather like the iCloud - a vast space, filled with various resources teachers and students could interact with; and then I found out what it really was. Was I right? Kind of.

The Community of Learning (CoL) is a new initiative for Otago, hopefully appearing in Dunedin Catholic schools next year. Planning first came about in July last year, when Dunedin’s ten Catholic schools put together an expression of interest to the Ministry of Education, and then began planning what they would do with a Community of Learning. See, Dunedin isn’t the only Community of Learning in the country: an article from the Ministry of Education on the 21st of August this year announced thirteen new Communities across the country, Otago being one of the regions named. Instead of being on our own, the Community of Learning encompassing Kavanagh (as the only Catholic secondary school) and the nine Catholic primary schools here, is joining 210 other Communities across the country. How many people does 210 Communities mean? Well, now two-thirds of all school learners are in a Community of Learning, which is around 580,000 children and young people.

You may be wondering what a Community of Learning actually does, and how the whole thing works, and I was, too, so I spoke to our principal, Mr O’Brien, and the principal of Sacred Heart Dunedin North, Mr Paul Richardson, to find out what the buzz is about.

From Mr Richardson, I learned how the actual Community will run. It will be headed by a Stewardship Committee (usually members of Boards of Trustees), who then interact with a management group (usually principals), who then interact with the lead principal (who is involved two days a week, currently), who interacts with the across school teachers, who then interact with the within school teachers. The lead principal is also assisted by an expert partner from the Ministry of Education, who helps the CoL to set its Achievement Challenges. This setup means all teachers and principals, despite their respective level of involvement, feel included and welcomed in the process. When the CoL is fully implemented, the teachers will be able to share their teaching practices across schools.

Mr Richardson described to me how the CoL hopes to achieve communication between primary schools and secondary schools, allowing teachers to share how students within their schools learn best, thus allowing easier transitions from primary to secondary schools for students with learning difficulties. This across school interaction will also allow other teaching practices and learning pathways to come into play, thereby allowing teachers to explore the various ways students learn and to find ways that accommodate individual students’ learning better. This means students moving from, say, Yr 6 at a given primary school into Yr 7 at Kavanagh, will possibly have worked with the various teachers beforehand, and/or the teachers may have been given information about how specific students work best. The main goal of a CoL is to help students learn better across all ages and schools, and this process will also strengthen bonds between teachers, schools, and students and their relationships with schools and learning.

Mr O’Brien echoed these sentiments. When asked about how this will affect Kavanagh, he replied: “For Kavanagh itself, it should mean we will have better systems in place as students transition from primary in Yr 6 to Yr 7. This includes things like students’ learning information, test results or other special needs.” While this may sound generalised, what this does is enables teachers to work better with students, with clearer ideas of who they are and how they work earlier on the year. Mr O’Brien continued: “Whilst this happens now we do not have a unified system or methodology with means it can be quite ad hoc or at least inconsistent and creating a lot of repetition. Going forward we should be also able to focus on similar learning goals and share expertise to raise student achievement or improve well-being or general life choices and outcomes.” How the CoL hopes to benefit primary schools is continued in secondary schools, as we can see, with the continued across school teaching practices and student support. As for the students being able to be active and have a voice in the CoL, Mr O’Brien says “This will ultimately expand to the other schools in the CoL and involve students at all levels working on individual and joint projects. At some time I would envisage that we ask for student input on ways we can strengthen relationships in the CoL and work together.”

The Community of Learning will start next year and will benefit all Catholic schools in Dunedin. While it’s not the iCloud I imagined, it will be vastly more productive to have actual teachers and students interacting and exchanging learning ideas, rather than pulling them out of thin air like magicians, as I originally thought. Creating a full CoL, in a way that allows students to feel supported every step of the way and ensures teachers feel able to move across schools and find new ways of looking at teaching practices, seems like the best way forward for schools. Overall, I’m rather proud of Kavanagh for being involved in something like this, especially as the only secondary school.

Welcome to the future of learning!



Kavanagh Day scores: 1st Pompallier; 2nd Rice; 3rd Bodkin; 4th Ambrose; 5th Gabriel; 6th McAuley.



Farewell to Prof. Drummond

In August the Board of Trustees had a farewell function for Bernadette Drummond, who has taken up the Chair of Orthopaedic Dentistry at the University of Leeds in England, an outstanding achievement. She was the first female professor of dentistry in the 104-year history of the University of Otago Faculty of Dentistry. Prof. Drummond has served on the Kavanagh College Board as a Bishop’s representative since 2007 but has given over fifteen years’ service to Kavanagh College. Principal Tracy O’Brien said she epitomises someone who has been selfless in her service. She is someone to be relied on with her calm wisdom and keen analytical mind, honed from her outstanding career in academia. Prof. Drummond said she intends to come “home” to Dunedin in the future but she sees it as an exciting opportunity to return to Leeds where she studied for her PhD. Like the University of Otago, the University of Leeds School of Dentistry is recognised as one of the world’s leading universities in that discipline. We thank Prof. Drummond and wish her every success and pray for her safe return to Dunedin. Above: Mr O’Brien presents Prof. Drummond with a gift from the College. Fr Cunningham and former BOT Chair Erin Barton are reflected in the mirror.



Maths...

Tobias Devereux has done it again. After topping the Kavanagh Yr 11, 12 and 13 Maths classes over the last three years (when he was in Yrs 6, 7 and 8), he has, perhaps, gone one better: in addition to gaining Distinctions or High Distinctions in ICAS Digital, Computer and Algorithmic Thinking, Science and Mathematics, Tobias has now actually won the New Zealand Junior Mathematics prize. This is big deal! Several thousand Yr 9-11 students compete in this tough competition. Tobias is the top Yr 9 student for the country. Outstanding!

...and Spelling bee winners

Competing in the lower South Island semi-final of the New Zealand Spelling Bee was Kavanagh’s spelling team, Tobias Devereux, Mitchell Stewart, Riley Mortimer (all in Yr 9) and Rosa Latton (Yr 10). After ten rounds, Mitchell (seen on the right) was selected as one of two finalists in the New Zealand Spelling Bee in October. The words which Mitchell spelled correctly were: quest, exaggerate, dictator, tribute, appetite, utensil, souvenir, myriad, tremulous and dubious.



Kav Kwiz by Tobias Devereux

1. Which day of the year is Pi Day?
2. What is $5 + 13 \times 3$?
3. How many sides does a dodecagon have?
4. Who invented the formula $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ (for a right angled triangle)?
5. Who is considered the Father of Geometry?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 4!



HAVE YOUR SAY

Latorise Makes Us Wise, by Rancel Noquilla, Yr 11

Health, performance and time. The three aspects of life school start time could affect. Ever gone to first period half asleep? Ever sat next to someone complaining about how little sleep they got? I’m 100% sure you have. Our school shouldn’t start earlier than 10.00 am for Yr 9 and up. Why? (The answer is simple: our beauty sleep, but this never convinces adults.) With classes kicking off at 10.00 am, we will be healthier, have a better attitude towards learning (therefore higher grades) but have less time outside of school. Who wouldn’t want higher grades or to be healthier, though?

Obviously, our health is extremely important (duh). How are we supposed to learn and build our futures if we’re constantly sick, tired or even dead? An earlier start time means less sleep, and no, “just go to bed earlier” is not a solution. We’re going through puberty. Our minds have been programmed to feel sleepy much, much later than before (man, I miss those earlier, youthful years where we didn’t have to do things like write essays, errrrhmm). With our body clock telling us we can’t rest till around 12-00 am, (and having to wake up at 7.00am or earlier) it’s impossible to get the recommended eight hours minimum sleep. Let’s be honest: even ten hours isn’t enough but we need the recommended eight at least. Studies have found that this lack of sleep hurts cognitive processes, such as the ability to pay attention, solve problems and concentrate. We obviously need these. Not enough sleep can also lead to serious long-term health disorders like diabetes, heart disease and an overall a shorter life expectancy. Yay! It’s bad enough we spend at least eight years of our lives preparing for our future; now that future won’t even be that long? Apparently, sleep deficiency can also trigger mood disorders like anxiety and depression which will impact our ability to learn and live a good life. It’s not as if this is the reason we are forced to go to school in the first place. Right?

Time, however, could be negatively influenced by this change. Time for students, teachers and their families for things other than school. We can be very busy after school. Whether it’s sport, work or managing our annoying younger siblings, (or relaxing in front of the heat-pump shoveling down food while watching Netflix after a long stressful day) we’re busy people. A later start time moves all events into the afternoon, some of which may not be adjustable to this change (I can’t just move my ‘Teen Wolf’ or ‘Attack on Titan’ later. I have priorities!). Sport draws can’t be shifted if every other school finishes earlier (of course, they could just move our games later and other schools’ first). Bus times can’t be moved just for us (even though most buses run every fifteen to twenty minutes so students could still get to school). Our siblings can’t stay home alone just because our parents are at work. Even if education is ‘crucial’ for us as adolescents, we still have a life out of school, a life this shift could interrupt (even though most problems arising do have a solution).

Our performance. The very thing teachers seem to care about the most. The very thing that could change our grades, for better or for worse. Changing the start time to 10.30am-ish could alter how us teens work in class and our attitude towards it. A Wellington high school is one of the few schools in New Zealand that begins later than 9.00 am. According to a study conducted on them by the Massey University Sleep/Wake Research Centre (who definitely know their stuff), the 10.15 am start for all seniors is reported to be extremely beneficial for the teens and their workload. The students were said to be more alert, responsive and engaged in activities like group work, writing notes or just paying attention in general (who wouldn’t be after a good night’s rest though?). There was a significant change in the classroom atmosphere and although their grades were not shared, it is likely they improved. Actually, in response to the ‘Christchurch Earthquakes’, one school changed its start time to 11.00 am temporarily and student grades went up significantly, proving my point above. Sure, tutoring is a big help but the most important factor to learning is focusing and without sleep, we are without that focus.

Although changing start time may be a time-consuming task, (meaning a lot of people would be involved) I believe the idea should be considered. The benefits, especially towards more sleep, outweigh the negatives (of which solutions can be found). After all, how do we know if we don’t try? How do we improve if we don’t change? I hear adults saying a lot that we are at the point where life is starting to get serious. But how do we take in ‘NCEA credits’ and ‘externals’ if a task as simple as sleeping isn’t available?



Art attack

Joy Auckram won an Excellence award for art at Celebrate, the Otago Art Teachers’ Association exhibition at the Otago School of Art.



One small step in September?

Four Kavanagh teachers, Ms S Heinz, Mrs L Naylar, Mrs S Robinson and Mr C Earl, completed a minimum of 10,000 steps per day in September. This was not simply to increase fitness but also to raise funds for cerebral palsy as a social justice project.



Enviro Council making seed tapes

At the end of Term 3 the Senior Enviro Council held a Mufti Day to raise money for gardening equipment. The Junior Enviro Club is going to be busy this spring planting and looking after the school’s little herb and vegetable garden in the Mercy Yard. At the moment the Junior Enviro Club together with members of the Senior Council working on the seed tapes with a variety of vegetable seeds ready to be planted.



Teacher Mr I Adamson does his bit at Market Day.

Well done, Caleb!

This Aurora Science Fair entry by Caleb Simpson, Yr 8, called “Walking on Water: What Affects Surface Tension?” won a Premier Award, the Aurora Award, the NZ Institute of Chemistry Award, the University of Otago Dept of Mathematics & Statistics Award and the NZ Marine Sciences Centre Gifted & Talented Award.



Market Day a valuable lesson

In September Ms Armstrong’s Yr 10 Economics class got together in small companies to experience selling a product and making a profit. Some comments: “Although our stand looked very cool, we would have liked to have more signs and a big and clear price list... We had fun setting up and have learned some valuable lessons in running a stall/small business. We would want to advertise it better so people would be more informed about our stall... We learned a lot about productivity and salesmanship. Market Day was a good experience because we learnt important business skills that we can use in our real life and we are proud to give some of our earnings to charity... It was a lot of fun.”



Ella Reilly, Yr 7



Martin Kirilov, Yr 8



Paige Carey, Yr 9

Holly Trainor-Ulakiola, Yr 10



Oliver Hill, Yr 11

Bunch of Seven



Daniel McClymont, Yr 12



Nashi Duran, Yr 13

What’s your karaoke song?

Ella: ‘Silence’ by Khalid and Marshmello.
Martin: AC DC’s ‘Thunderstruck.’
Paige: ‘Little things’ by One Direction.
Holly: ‘What’s love got to do with it?’
Oliver: ‘Seven Nation Army’ by White Stripes.
Daniel: ‘Humble’ by Kendrick Lamar.
Nashe: Anything. It’s not about sounding good, but sounding terrible.

Best moment of you in 2017?

Ella: Coming to Kavanagh and making new friends.
Martin: Going to Europe for the holidays.
Paige: Winning netball finals.
Holly: Looking in the mirror.
Oliver: Spending the first day of the year in a plane over Russia.
Daniel: Going in the hydroslide with my friend Will.
Nashe: Converting oxygen into carbon dioxide every day.

What animal are you most afraid of?

Ella: Lions or sharks.
Martin: Jellyfish.
Paige: Spiders.
Holly: Seals.
Oliver: Very large, ferocious, snarling dogs.
Daniel: The whale.
Nashe: Humans.

What could you eat A LOT of?

Ella: Licorice.
Martin: Croissants.
Paige: Potatoes OR chicken.
Holly: Tofu.
Oliver: Chicken Katsu Curry from Café Tokyo.
Daniel: Nutri-grain.
Nashe: Filipino street foods.

Who’s your dream celebrity interview?

Ella: Liza Koshy.
Martin: Novak Djokovic.
Paige: Nina Dobrev.
Holly: Tom Holland.
Oliver: The great Japanese film maker, Hayao Miyazuki.
Daniel: Kate Upton.
Nashe: Cara Delevingne.



Clockwise: Girls Rugby 10s team, Hockey, Basketball and Football teams.



Winter Tournament

Kavanagh College had a very successful Winter Tournament week in Term 3. We sent a mixed Hockey team to Ashburton which finished 7th out of 12 teams. The girls' First XI football team had their highest finish with 11th. The boys' First XI football team won the Linwood Cup, beating Papanui 4-2 in the final; this is the second time the team has won this tournament. The junior basketball girls are the best team in the South Island, winning their tournament: an awesome result. The junior boys' team finished 22nd. The curlers also won the South Island tournament; they now get ready to compete in the Nationals in the holidays. We also had a girls' rugby 10s team compete in a tournament at Hancock Park; we finished second out of 14 teams, losing to St Hilda's in the final. Well done, girls! Our Senior A netball team finished 19th out of 32 teams in B grade at their tournament in Christchurch. A big thanks to all the coaches and managers who went with all the teams.



Well done, Craig!

Otago Rugby referees were invited to attend 'an evening with the test referees'. Craig is a first-year referee and had a great first season. Craig got to meet test Rugby referees Nigel Owens and Wayne Barnes before the All Blacks vs Wallabies test match at Forsyth Barr Stadium.



St Dominic's Day Mass

On Thursday 3 August, Yr 7 joined students from Sacred Heart, St Mary's Kaikorai, St Mary's Milton and St Joseph's Cathedral Schools to attend Mass at Holy Name Church in order to celebrate the feast of St Dominic. The music for the Mass was provided by a group of musicians from Kavanagh. This is an annual Mass which involves the schools founded by the Dominican Sisters.



House singing Competition

Each House choir had to sing a given contemporary song, followed by a rousing couple of verse of the school Song. The results were: 1st: Bodkin; 2nd: Rice; 3rd: McAuley; 4th: Pompallier; 5th: Gabriel; 6th: Ambrose.

Never at a loss for words: students impress at the Bishop's Shield Competition

This year Kavanagh College was excited to host the 74th annual Bishop's Shield Speech and Drama Competition with students competing from St Kevin's, St Peter's, Verdon College and, of course, Kavanagh too. With events ranging from improvised speeches to drama performances, we were all eagerly waiting for the weekend to finally arrive after weeks of preparing for our events and trying to perfect our performances we were all excited to show everyone what we had prepared and hopefully take home a few trophies, too. According to debater Anna Roberts, Yr 12: "Although most of us were nervous, we pushed through and gave it our all. The weekend was a great time to make new friends and meet lots of people with similar interests. It was awesome to see others perform and no matter what school you came from everyone was supportive." Although Kavanagh came second again, we still managed to win individual event trophies and next year hopefully we will win overall down in Gore. From first timers to people who have been competing at Bishop's Shield for years everyone had a great experience and should be really proud. Well done, Kavanagh!

The team was: Junior Drama: Lexie Tomlinson, Kate Kelly, Andrew Wilson, Stella Coulton, Sam Meikle; Senior Drama: (winning the J B Lynch CFC Cup): Sophie Whibley, Tuseka Njoko, Clare McDonnell, Josh Chisholm, Elliot Blyth; Junior Scripture: Lexie Tomlinson; Senior Scripture (study questions): Ella Woods, second; Senior Scripture (psalm sight reading): Ella Woods; Impromptu Speech: Ollie Meikle; Prepared speech: Therese Makasini; Junior Debating: Sam Meikle, Quinn Wilson, Rosa Latton; Senior Debating: (winning the Father Christopher Gaffey Cup): Jacob Reeves, Anna Roberts and Tuseka Njoko; Best leader in Senior Debates (Karen Austin Cup): Jacob Reeves; Best speaker in Senior Debates (Hibernian Cup): Anna Roberts; Most promising Senior Dramatic performance: Sophie Whibley. Runner-up for the Bishop's Shield: Marist Centennial Plate: Kavanagh College (25 points). Winner: Verdon College. (30 points).





profiling...

FULL NAME: Sophie Louise Whibley, Head Girl.
BORN IN: Auckland, New Zealand; AGE: 17; STAR SIGN: Gemini.
WHAT’S THE BEST THING ABOUT KAVANAGH? I think the best thing about Kavanagh is the sense of community and family, you can meet so many people with similar interests!
AND THE WORST? I’d have to say the worst thing about Kavanagh is the cliques, like any school; everyone can be so segregated sometimes!
WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR FIRST DAYS AT KAVANAGH? Hahaha, I remember forgetting where my tutor class was on the second day, but there were so many people to show me where to go!
WHAT WILL YOU REMEMBER MOST ABOUT BEING AT KAVANAGH? I will definitely remember the friends that I’ve made and the performance opportunities I’ve been given, Kavanagh has definitely helped me enhance my strengths.
WHAT DO YOU LIKE READING? WHAT’S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK? I like

reading both fact and fiction; books about the world and different cultures and religions definitely peak my interest! My favourite book would have to be “The Prophet” by Kahlil Gibran.
IF YOU HAD A MASCOT OR SYMBOL WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE My symbol would definitely be a treble clef because of my love for music!
WHAT SPORTS DO YOU PLAY? I currently don’t play any sports, but this year I started tap dancing, which is a lot of fun!
WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR YOU THIS YEAR? Getting the most out of my education and giving back to Kavanagh, I hope to make a lasting impression on the school!
WHERE DO YOU HOPE TO BE IN TEN YEARS’ TIME? At the moment I don’t have a set career path or anything, in ten years’ time I just hope to be happy.
WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO STUDENTS FOR 2017? I would tell students in 2017 to make the most out of their time at Kavanagh: it’s over before you know it.



Above: Sophie with Head Students Alexi Hart, Nico Cockerill and Nat Peacock.

Kreative Korner

God’s Whisper, by Rosa Flaherty, Yr 13

I was there to see the world burst into creation. There were stars ballooning around me, and my thoughts became tangible, touchable beings. Like some of the great painters to come, God danced around His creation, adding final touches. The contrast of Him and the nothingness surrounding Him, with a small ball of colour between them, was beautiful. He smiled. Finally, everything was in its place, and He sat back to rest.

As His first creation, we could see His thoughts. They were always wandering around, bumping into us with a soft smile. It was a muted, mellow existence, of washed out skies and yellow clouds, of pink daisies and watching the discovery of time. Men were not the first, nor the most precious, to find time and space and thought. That prize goes to long forgotten names and places, before the islands shifted and the fire reigned and the ice descended.

Before we were stricken from the love of our God. Before Men.

We were witness to a creation unlike any before, when Men were made. God spent many hours shaping His thoughts until they could hold flowers in their hands, and teaching them how to watch the stars. They were His favourite, those who could look at something tiny and see the beatific. God said He created Man in His image, but why were they allowed to break the divine rules? To disobey and be pardoned, like unknowing children. We were to care for them, help them emulate the pure love of God. But how could we help them, when even the most repugnant of men could be forgiven? We did what we could, appearing in their dreams and guiding their souls. We gave them words and ways and even some of the thoughts we hold so venerated within us.

Among all of these years, there has been forbidden knowledge hiding. God placed it in the future sometimes, ahead of the age it was needed. He wanted to see what His praised Men could do if they were left alone. Sometimes I feared we were simply a prototype for those who roam on the earth, but then I reminded myself: we are seraphim. We are all God needs. These are simply beings like He has created many times before, and one day He will leave them too. We will go with him, ascending to another reality, another star, another plane of life.

The more time He spent with the Men, the more we began to worry. We were being forgotten. This had never happened before. I began to see less and less of His gentle thoughts, as they began to be gifted to His ‘revered’ humans, those who were closest to us. Instead, we were left to wander with his lightning filled thoughts, those that snarled and watched us with unblinking eyes.

I began to watch the humans more and more. What made them so special? Could it be the way they tried to care for the other creatures that roamed? But we did that too. I watched God too, as He ignored the seraphim requests and gave his attention to the humans. One day I could take it no more. I looked over the edge of the muted space we occupied, down to the mess of colours and death and ideas, and stepped before I could let God see the thought. And so, I fell to earth.

The first thing that struck me was the noise. Nothing ever stopped. How could they not hear the ache of the sun as it rose again and again, pulling the light behind it? Or the frailty of the earth as it carried them all? How could they ignore the weeping moon, as it tried to see the sun before it went down? These were creatures with cold, blue hearts, and they didn’t deserve God’s eyes on them, let alone his thoughts. But I soon discovered they were deaf to these pains, and could only hear their own. This realisation scared me at first, and it still scares me, because God created them with his thoughts. That thought is one I keep buried deep in my soul, because that would mean He only hears his own pain. Then what does that make us? Or his divine rules? Where does our purpose go, if He isn’t what He made himself out to be. If we aren’t what He made us to be.

If He has a fundamental flaw, so do we all.

As I fell, I felt my thoughts retreating into my skull, creeping into every crevice they could find. My thoughts are no longer separate beings, and must be described using words, which is far too strenuous for nothing close to the original thing. I began to view the humans differently- their thoughts weren’t pure, but they had to work so hard to share them, and I admired that. Another thing that struck me was how brash their world was- the colours filled every corner, with no rest for the eyes. Everything was turned up to its highest volume, all competing for attention. Yet, I felt invigorated by this place. Here, all thoughts were concealed. The divine was forgotten, no matter how hard He tried to care for his humans.

There’s so much here, and he’s so far above.

The humans are attracted to me, so perhaps a spark of God remains, and I try to help them, at any cost. They look to me for freedom, for a reminder of god. I move among them, in every city at once, amazed by their advances. God would be so proud. But he has moved on, and so I walk alone. They don’t always see me, but I think they know I’m here.

What is it they say?
Speak of the Devil.

Guitar Lesson, by Oliver Hill, Yr 11

The idea comes to him at Company Bay on the 3:45 pm bus to Portobello; it is as clear as the mirrored reflection of the harbour. “I will buy an electric guitar, learn to play, become a rock star. Then I won’t have to work so hard in school for those NCEA credits Mum keeps going on about.” He can already see himself on stage, surrounded by thousands of cheering and applauding fans. He will introduce the idea to his mother during dinner that night.

Before the meal, he begins to feel apprehensive: there is the problem with money. He had already saved a few dollars, but he is sure guitars are expensive, so he wonders how he can make it sound more convincing. He will do chores around the house for increased pocket money. Putting out the bins and making the bed must be worth at least ten dollars each. Surely then his mother would make up the difference. At the dinner table, he pushes the peas around on his plate, showing no interest in eating. Tentatively he begins to speak.

“I was thinking,” he says casually, “I don’t like how I get pocket money for doing nothing, maybe I could do some chores around the house and earn money for each thing I do?”

His mother slowly raises her eyes from her plate, and with a weary look he recognises well, sighs, “What is it this time, Brendan?”

As soon as he hears this, it is as if someone has thrown a rock into a pool and as it sinks, his hopes sink with it. Resolutely, he replies, “I want to get an electric guitar.” Immediately his mother reminds him of all the things he’d asked for: the three computers, the expensive speakers, Pokémon cards, the Wacom tablet, more Pokémon cards. The list seems endless. She states emphatically that they were a complete waste of time and money. Then her face suddenly brightens, she has an idea.

“Your Uncle Tommy has an old guitar in his attic. That would do for starters, then you could take lessons from him.”

She seems delighted with this solution because it costs nothing. He remembers how much he dislikes Uncle Tommy for always playing that stupid guitar at birthdays and Christmas. Brendan rises slowly and deliberately from his chair, dropping his fork with a clang, he shouts, “I don’t want some rubbish, beat-up, old guitar. I want a new one!” Then he flees to his room slamming the door behind him.

When he returns from school the next day, Uncle Tommy’s dented, uncool guitar stands in the corner of the living room. A knot twists in Brendan’s stomach.

“I know what you said,” his mother remarks, “but just give it a try for me, please.”

Without emotion he grabs the instrument by the neck and trails it along behind him. Lifting it onto his lap, he holds down the thinnest string and plucks while a high pitched screeching comes from the sad old guitar. How on earth, he thinks, will I ever be famous with this piece of worn out junk? He wonders if the internet has any pointers on how to play quickly and well. On YouTube, he finds a tutorial where an elderly man with leathery skin and long white unkempt hair strums an acoustic guitar not unlike the one he holds in his hands. The song he is teaching is by some ancient band, who are probably dead, called the Rolling Stones, but he gives it a try anyway.

After a while he can play the first few chords, and he plays along while a singer wails, “You can’t always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you might just find, you get what you need.” Brendan smiles, but he feels the sting of salt water as it fills his eyes. He turns to his mother and mutters a barely audible, “Thank you.”

He slowly stands and gently places his vintage guitar against the wall.

Chocolate, by Caleb Simpson

As I open the block , the wrapper rips
And I shove the treasure to my lips
The taste is like a block of heaven
And suddenly I wish I’d got seven

I bite off a bit and put the rest down
Then I look, and see, it’s so beautifully brown
One more I say and snap off a row
It tastes so good, it seems to glow

Then my mum comes in the room
And says I should share some soon
But I find myself restrained
And soon only one row remains

I break off a piece to give it to my brother
Then I feel guilty and break off another
I suddenly feel like I cannot resist
But I grit my teeth and clench my fist

I will share the last of this chocolate, I swear
But really, I think, it’s quite unfair
So I suddenly stuff it in my gob
One smooth, milky, yummy blob



Caleb Simpson, Yr 8, was the winner 2017 Dunedin Chocolate Bard Competition, age 11-17 category.

KAV KWIZ ANSWERS:

1. March 14 (because Americans write it month/day which is 3/14 and the first three digits of pi are 3.14); 2. 44; 3. 12; 4. Pythagoras; 5. Euclid.

Editor: Pauline Ireland-Kenny.
Print Media Prefects: Taylor Baxter, Rosa Flaherty and Tabitha German.
Thanks to: Chris Sullivan (library photo),
Printed by: Certa Solutions, 60 Fox Street, Dunedin.
Kavanagh College, 340 Rattray Street, Dunedin.
Ph (03) 477 3408
Email: pkenny@kavanagh.school.nz